



NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEBRASKA
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
May 9, 2015, 3 p.m.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS:
Taylor Gage, (402)-471-1970
taylor.gage@nebraska.gov, Governor's Office
Jodie Fawl, (402) 471-7428; (402) 326-3179
jodie.fawl@nebraska.gov, NEMA

Communities Hope for No More Rain

Federal Disaster Declaration Considered

Lincoln, Neb. — Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) staff continued to call and gather damage information from local emergency managers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency liaison from Region VII was requested to report to the Nebraska State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) on Monday to assist in planning for recovery operations, including an evaluation of the possibility of this storm and flooding event rising to the level of a federal disaster.

NEMA is fielding calls from citizens and providing them with information and the best place for them to get the information they need. NEMA staff are working 24-hours-a-day in the SEOC this weekend to monitor weather conditions and respond to requests for assistance from local emergency managers.

The SEOC is in partial activation in response to damages resulting from tornadoes and flooding and is staffed by officials from the Nebraska State Patrol, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Roads and the Nebraska Military Department.

Nebraska National Guard and the **Nebraska State Patrol** provided security in DeWitt where flooding affected much of the community. All National Guard missions are complete.

Department of Environmental Quality is working with several businesses and industries to develop plans for working with treatment and containment of waste ponds.

Department of Natural Resources continues to monitor the aftermath of the storm including river and dam conditions. Citizens are advised to be cautious about high river stages and water running over roads and dams' auxiliary spillways. Officials urge people not to risk personal safety and vehicle damage by getting stuck in a flooded roadway too deep to cross. Take the high road and turn around.

Nebraska Department of Roads

Please use caution as roadways may still be flooded and additional rainfall could change conditions rapidly.

- **Highway 136 at the west edge of Beatrice is closed.**
- **Highway 81 southbound: obstruction on roadway, between NE 85D Spur and NE 85H Spur (29 miles south of Fairmont)**

Motorists should exercise caution traveling roadways in south central and southeast Nebraska due to earlier reports of roadway obstructions and flooded roadways. Forecasts for additional rainfall.

Department of Health and Human Services reports it is working to assist the Parkview Nursing Home in Deshler that

was evacuated to the public school due to flooding. DHHS staff is assessing needs of other assisted living facilities. Public Health is monitoring public water systems in communities affected by flooding.

Nebraska Weather Service — Southeast Nebraska is still at risk for thunderstorms Saturday. However, heavy rainfall is not expected to be as widespread as it was Wednesday night. Isolated storms could drop one to two inches of rain in some areas and that could be enough to do damage in saturated areas.

According the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service the following rivers and creeks are still at flood stage in Nebraska as of 11 a.m. Saturday:

Big Blue River

Near Crete, 22.81 feet – at Flood Stage which is 18 to 22 feet

Beatrice, 23.78 – at Flood Stage which is 18 to 26 feet

Near Barneston, 26.37 –at Flood Stage which is 20 to 27 feet

Turkey Creek

Near Wilber, 12.51 feet – is at Flood Stage which is 12.5 to 16 feet

DeWitt, 24.44 – is at Flood Stage which is 23.5 to 25 feet

In other weather news affecting the state, a winter weather advisory has been issued for Cheyenne, Kimball and Morrill Counties from midnight (MDT) tonight till 6 p.m. (MDT) Sunday. Moderate to heavy snow and winds 20-30 MPH (gusting to 40 mph) will contribute to hazardous travel conditions.

Adams County Emergency Management — **Chip Volcek**, director of Adams County Emergency Management, reported that all the debris was removed in Roseland and there was no plan for additional work this weekend in Roseland. Most of the debris fields in the fields surrounding Roseland has also been cleaned up as well. Homeowner are working with insurance companies. Three homes ended up being totally destroyed.

Gage County Emergency Management — **Tim Stutzman**, director of Gage County Emergency Management, reported that the May 3 storm destroyed the 911 dispatch equipment in Beatrice by a lightning strike. May 6 storms produced heavy rains that caused flooding along Big Blue river basin. Beatrice has both bridges closed due to high waters. Beatrice and Gage County are still accessing damages as water recedes before declaring disaster.

The village of Barneston is currently under a water restriction and boiling notice after it lost a water supply transfer line was across the river from Wymore to the village water treatment plant. The village is getting an alternate supply from Lower Big Blue NRD.

The village clerk says residents will need to restrict their water usage and boil their water.

Jefferson County Emergency Management — **John McKee**, director of Jefferson County Emergency Management, reports one fatality in Fairbury. An elderly woman was found dead in her flooded basement. Friday morning, Jefferson County authorities recovered the body of 86-year-old Betty McMullen from the flooded basement of her home on her acreage south of Fairbury. This is the only known fatality for this event.

Electrical power has been restored in the affected areas. As of Friday water was still over many county roads so few damage assessments have been completed, McKee said. One culver was known to be washed out.

Water is receding and a lot of roads are closed. McKee said damage to railroad track is being repaired and the Little Blue NRD is repairing a waterline under the Little Blue River. "We escapes with minimal tornado damage...a few

pivots flipped, a few out buildings damaged and some trees but the flooding got us pretty good.”

The county had a record flood. The Little Blue River crested at 25.42 feet, breaking the record of 24.33 feet set in 1992. Flood stage for the river is 17 feet. Both the river and Rose Creek, which also caused flooding problems in the area, were receding Friday.

Johnson County Emergency Management — **Clint Strayhorn**, director of Johnson County Emergency Management, reports that flood waters washed out a culvert and eroded the roadway into a dangerous sinkhole approximately eight feet deep north of Vesta.

Lancaster County Emergency Management — **James Davidsaver**, director of Lancaster County Emergency Management, reports that further inspections are needed to determine the extent of damage in the county although two bridges suffered damage. Those who evacuated their homes in the North and South Bottoms returned home Friday morning as waters receded.

Nuckolls County Emergency Management — **Brad Baker**, director of Nuckolls County Emergency Management, reports that four homes were completely destroyed as well as numerous farm buildings. An undetermined amount of county roads and bridges were damaged and destroyed. Families without homes have found temporary placement.

Saline County Emergency Management — **B.J. Fictum**, director Saline County Emergency Management, reports that clean-up and assessment were underway in the Saline County village of DeWitt Friday following the slow exit of floodwaters. An overnight curfew ended at 8 a.m. The town is open for those wishing to return to their homes and persons coming to clean up, but spontaneous volunteers is discouraged.

Thayer County Emergency Management — **Bill McPherson**, director for Thayer County Emergency Management, reports that Team Rubicon is sending an initial team of 10 volunteers for cleanup of basements and other projects in Thayer county with more expected in the coming days. Team Rubicon is an international non-profit disaster response organization that unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy disaster response teams, free of charge to communities affected by disasters across the country. McPherson said he anticipates Team Rubicon volunteers to be working the area for a least a week.

American Red Cross anyone needing assistance should call (844) 334-7569. The new, all-inclusive Emergency App from the American Red Cross provides people with instant access to emergency alerts, life-saving information, and ways to contact family and friends in one free, easy-to-use app for smart phones and tablets. The app is available in app stores by searching for the American Red Cross or by going to redcross.org/apps.

Local health departments and their emergency response coordinators are available at the following website:
<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Documents/ERCs.pdf>

The Salvation Army: Canteen is in Lincoln, ready for deployment. The Salvation Army are paying for some local feeding expenses in Fairbury and DeWitt. They are mobilizing clean-up kits, to be ready for distribution once the waters recede.

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